



## **Eastern Small-Footed Bat and the Northern Long-Eared Bat 90-Day Finding Questions and Answers**

### **What action is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service taking?**

The Service is initiating a status review for two bat species as a result of a 90-day finding on the Center for Biological Diversity's petition to list the eastern small-footed and the northern long-eared bats as threatened or endangered under the authority of the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

The Service published a notice in the *Federal Register* on June 29, 2011. The notice begins a 60-day information request period, which closes on August 29, 2011. Before making a 12-month finding on whether listing the two bats is warranted, the Service must gather and analyze the new information received during this period.

### **Why is the Service initiating a status review?**

Information in the petition and in the Service's files indicates that the continued existence of one or both of these species may be threatened by several factors, including habitat destruction and degradation, disturbance of hibernation areas and maternity roosts, and impacts related to white-nose syndrome, a deadly disease that has killed more than 1 million cave-hibernating bats since its discovery in 2006. Existing regulations of these activities may be inadequate to protect these two species.

### **Where are the eastern small-footed and northern long-eared bats found?**

The eastern small-footed bat occurs from eastern Canada and New England south to Alabama and Georgia and west to Oklahoma. Eastern small-footed bats are considered rare because of their patchy distribution and generally low population numbers.

Populations of the northern long-eared bat range across much of the eastern and north central United States and all Canadian provinces west to the southern Northwest Territories and eastern British Columbia, although the species is patchily distributed and rarely found in large numbers.

### **Have eastern small-footed and northern long-eared bats been affected by white-nose syndrome?**

The deaths of individuals of both species have been linked to WNS across portions of their ranges. The confirmation of WNS across large portions of the eastern small-footed bat's range and eastern sections of the northern long-eared bat's range, along with the historical and anticipated future rate of WNS spread, indicate that WNS may negatively impact large portions of the petitioned species' ranges in the near future.

## **How do I provide information for the status review of the eastern small-footed and northern long-eared bats?**

You may submit information by one of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments to Docket No. [FWS-R5-ES-2011-0024].
- U.S. mail or hand-delivery: Public Comments Processing, Attn: Docket No. [FWS-R5-ES-2011-0024]; Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, MS 2042-PDM; Arlington, VA 22203.

Comments must be received within 60 days, on or before August 29, 2011. The Service will post all comments on <http://www.regulations.gov>. This generally means the agency will post any personal information provided through the process. The Service is not able to accept email or faxes.

## **What type of information is the Service seeking?**

The Service uses the best available commercial and scientific data as the foundation for all endangered and threatened species classification decisions. The Service is asking for data, new information or suggestions. The Service is particularly seeking the following types of information:

- The eastern small-footed and northern long-eared bats' biology, range and population trends, including:
  - Habitat requirements for feeding, breeding and sheltering;
  - Genetics and taxonomy;
  - Historical and current range, including distribution patterns;
  - Historical and current population levels, and current and projected trends; and
  - Past and ongoing conservation measures for the species, its habitat or both;
- Species-specific population data (*e.g.*, hibernaculum counts) pre- and post-exposure to white-nose syndrome;
- Current and foreseeable threats faced by the eastern small-footed bat or northern long-eared bat in relation to the five factors (as defined in section 4(a)(1) of the ESA (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.));
- The specific physical and biological features to consider, and specific areas that may meet the definition of critical habitat, that should or should not be considered for a proposed critical habitat designation as provided by section 4 of the ESA; and
- The data and studies to support the information submitted.

## **What about other bat species affected by white-nose syndrome?**

The Service is collecting information on other non-listed bat species believed to be susceptible to WNS to determine if, in addition to existing threats, WNS may be increasing the extinction risk of these species. These additional species include the big brown bat, tri-colored bat (eastern pipistrelle), cave myotis and southeastern myotis.

The Service received a request to list the little brown bat in December 2010 and is reviewing the species' status.

**Where can more information can found?**

The finding and information about the eastern small-footed and northern long-eared bats is available online at <http://www.fws.gov/endangered>.

For additional information, please contact:

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More information about white-nose syndrome is available at <http://www.fws.gov/whitenosesyndrome/>.